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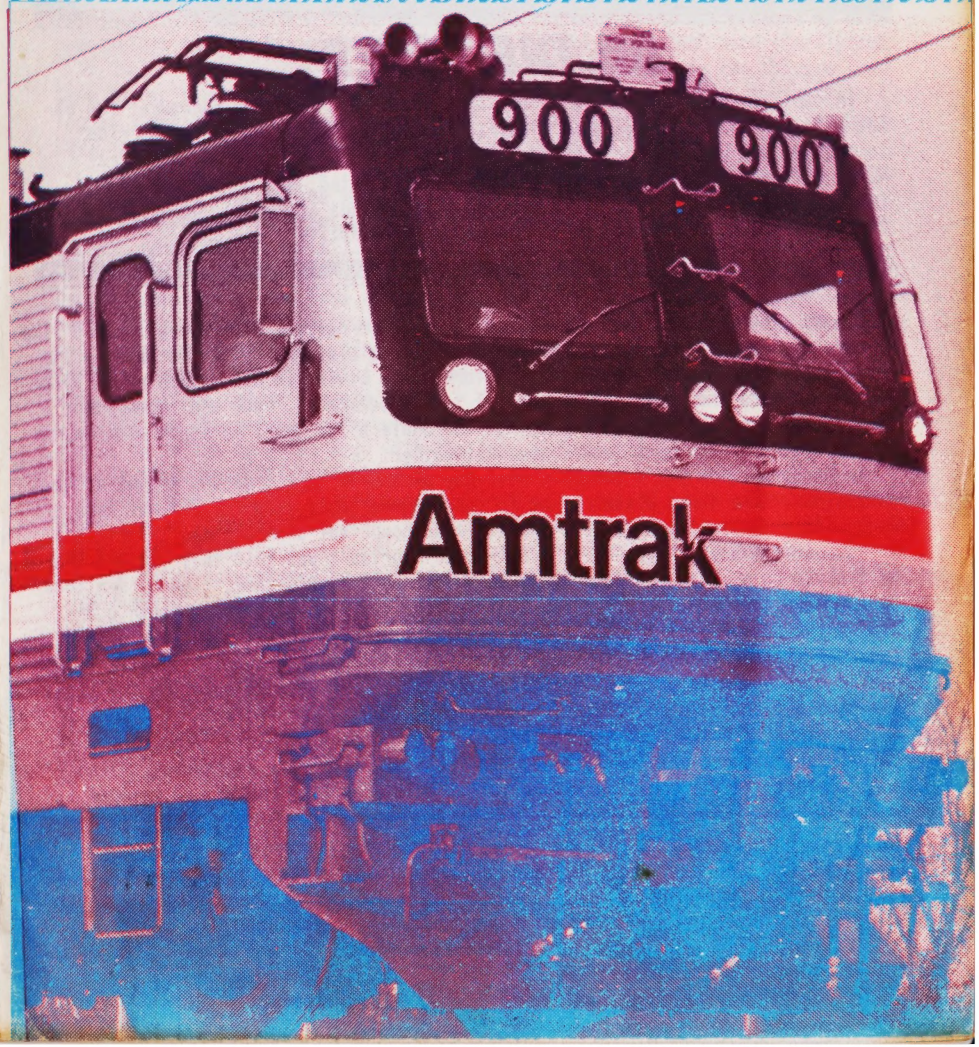

LETTERS

On page 10 of the Apr 27-Aug 2 National Timetable, Amtrak offers discounts to senior citizens and the handicapped with 25% off the regular one-way fares. The regular one-way fare must be $40 before the qualifying citizen can get the discount. This discount is good on all trains except the Metroliners.

The regular one-way fare from Rochester to New York City is $39, so the discount is not applicable. However, the one-way fare from Rochester to Newark, New Jersey is $40, so the fare can be discounted $10.

It would seem the over-65 man from Rochester who wished to ride Amtrak to New York City should buy a discount ticket to Newark and save himself $9. In some cases, a round-trip excursion rate is available which may or may not be cheaper than the 25% discount.

Henry Korman
Longview, Washington

ON THE COVER

In our last issue, Pete Bretz and Ken Maylath described the inaugural run of Amtrak's AEM-7 Swedish-designed electric locomotive in the Northeast Corridor. Locomotive 901 was used on that run, and here pictured is no. 900, the first AEM-7 off the GM assembly line. As Pete and Ken noted, engine 900 was tested in the Corridor and then sent to the DOT test grounds at Pueblo, Colorado for further tryouts. Photo by General Motors Electro-Motive Division.

Oceans of ink have flowed in negative comment on Amtrak. Therefore I would like to report a recent round trip that was a joy and a pleasure. I am no babe in the woods about Amtrak's earlier dismal performance. Living in New Hampshire in 1972-73, I went thru the whole performance of faulty equipment, rude and incompetent help, almost inconceivable timekeeping--the whole bit. But I've stuck with Amtrak and each year things have looked somewhat better.

In March my wife and I bought a five-day excursion fare from St. Albans VT to Washington. The first pleasure was in the reservation system. I did not have a long wait or a busy signal. The operator was competent and helpful. A bit improvement from a year ago: on a 1979 trip to Florida I was told that I could charge my tickets on my Visa or Master Charge, but I don't have either. Then I was told to purchase them at a local Amtrak station--the two nearest ones are both a 2½-hour drive away. So I spent a couple of days finding a travel agent who did not consider it lunacy to want to take a train to Florida. The agent I finally found was in Canada and is an agent for VIA Rail. This year with no question the tickets were mailed to me and I sent a check: chalk one up for Amtrak!

Our nine-car MONTREALER was comfortably full but not oversold. The cars were clean, warm and properly ventilated. The help was uniformly courteous, friendly and halpful. In the worst snowstorm to hit this area this winter, we whipped along, 30 minutes late, but only because of Customs and Immigration at St. Albans.

The return trip was equally pleasant. Altho we lost 32 minutes because of the work on the tunnel at Baltimore, we had regained it by the time we left New York. In the morning the lounge and dinette had been nicely cleaned for the breakfast crowd.

Of course, there are things we all might wish for. Having dined on the CANADIAN when Canadian Pacific operated it, I'm not enthused over Amdinette food. There is too much of McDonald's there for comfort, but I suspect that is the wave of the future and the kind of dining I would enjoy would be an enormous loser because it would price the average passenger out of the market.

Ten years ago we were often told that trains were the vehicle of the elderly. Amtrak has certainly reversed this trend. Many of the riders on #60-61 this trip were youthful, and the club car was a jumping spot.

Having been forced so often to criticize Amtrak, I'm happy this time to praise it. I can't wait to go again.

Rev. Walter F. Smith
Lisbon, New York

Robert W. Rynerson's article "Remote Control" (RTN #204) has crossed my desk. Some points made in his piece about "remote control reporting" need clarifying:

1. Mr. Rynerson seemed to imply that the piece appearing in the Chicago Tribune in April was written from an armchair without having ridden any trains. I logged about 80,000 miles on trains last year, excluding rapid transit and trolley cars but including freights, Amtrak, and commuter trains.

2. I have ridden all but two of the trains mentioned in the article in the last couple of years. The two are the PIONEER and DESERT WIND.

3. Mr. Rynerson apparently missed entirely the point of what I was trying to convey, so I will repeat it. Passenger trains, like almost everything else in society these days, are governed by the laws of economics. However, some trains were established by the laws of politics; the PIONEER and Harley Staggers Special being two examples. When those two laws come into conflict, economics inevitably tho not always immediately wins. I need only remind you of the way Congress tired of pumping big subsidies into the SST and space programs, and last year's trimming of the Amtrak program.

Right now there is an undercurrent in Congress to eliminate the whopping subsidies to Amtrak by doing away with the long-distance trains and beefing up service in the metropolitan corridors.

I discussed with Mr. Rynerson my examination of Amtrak route marketing studies years ago to indicate that even that agency's in-house studies showed that of the two routes the Las Vegas segment had the greater potential; however, the PIONEER was the first established because of political pressure.

We have a similar situation in the Chicago area, but in reverse. Amtrak for its own reasons in 1971 selected the lightly-populated Milwaukee Road route from Chicago to Milwaukee, leaving unserved the heavily-populated Chicago & North Western route a few miles to the east.

Mr. Rynerson also left unsaid in his critique a couple of prejudices I passed along to him by telephone: the Amfleet equipment, especially the food service cars, are inadequate on long distance runs, and Amtrak's major problem remains, as it was the day the agency was created, its consistency of service. Riding trains x-y-z can be a delightful experience one day and a disaster the next. We get the letters and calls from Amtrak riders to prove it.

To the best of my knowledge, the Chicago Tribune is not "anti-passenger train." We have supported the creation of the Chicago Regional Transportation Authority in an attempt to save and improve commuter railroad service here, as well as the extensive Illinois 403-B Amtrak subsidy program. We have opposed the attempts in Congress to eliminate all but the Northeast Corridor service to reduce Amtrak deficits, believing instead that the taxpayers of the western three

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fourths of the nation should not have to subsidize the trains of the East without at least some service of their own. However, we do not support rail service at substantial taxpayer subsidy just so a handful of rail fans can enjoy an occasional ride.

I find it curious that Amtrak operates service over a 900-mile route between Portland and Ogden but does not operate a train over a similar-length route serving Chicago-Indianapolis-Louisville-Nashville-Jacksonville-Miami.

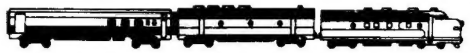
However, the primary criticism of the PIONEER, which I outlined to Mr. Ryner-son in our telephone conversation but which he did not seem to want to repeat in his critique, was that it was a poor substitute for thru passengers as compared to the EMPIRE BUILDER or ZEPHYR-COAST STARLIGHT combinations.

David M. Young
Chicago Tribune
Chicago, Illinois

LATEST AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

MARCH 1980 FIGURES--SECOND COLUMN IS % INCREASE OVER 1979

Metroliners	141,636	-7.4
NE Corr Conventional	418,965	-2.1
New Haven-Springfld	25,540	-13.0
NY-Philadelphia	221,259	7.8
Phila-Harrisburg	91,782	4.6
NY-Harrisburg	19,443	8.3
TOTAL NE CORRIDOR:	918,625	-0.3
NY-Niagara Falls	57,446	1.6
Chicago-St. Louis	10,037	13.2
Chicago-Milwaukee	27,202	13.6
Chicago-Detroit	37,083	2.6
Chicago-Carbondale	15,640	2.1
Chicago-Quincy	9,211	11.4
L.A.-San Diego	97,554	28.0
Portland-Vancouver	13,372	14.8
Washington-Cincinnati	12,233	124.6
Wash.-Martinsburg	23,458	8.4
Oakland-Bakersfield	13,967	104.5
New York-Montreal	9,815	13.0
Chicago-Port Huron	8,455	8.4
Chicago-Dubuque	4,211	-6.6
Chicago-Duluth	9,296	3.0
Chicago-Valparaiso	17,923	--
Chicago-Kansas City	12,385	62.0
TOTAL SHORT DIST.:	379,288	22.9



Washington-Montreal	32,192	1.5
New York-Florida	65,751	-13.6
Chicago-NY/Washington	18,129	24.0
Chicago-Cincinnati/DC	9,879	16.2
Chicago-Seattle	15,388	9.2
Chicago-S.F./L.A.*	43,978	86.5
Chicago-Los Angeles	23,828	22.6
Chicago-New Orleans	17,825	-3.2
Chicago-Texas	19,057	73.3
L.A.-New Orleans	7,711	-4.1
L.A.-Seattle	44,253	19.0
Chicago-NY/Boston	23,236	20.5
Boston-Newport News	55,922	4.3
New York-Savannah	33,416	-0.5
Seattle-Salt Lake	14,264	6.6
New York-New Orleans	21,401	20.3
TOTAL LONG DIST.:	446,230	11.5
Special trains	10,572	38.1
SYSTEM TOTAL:	1,754,715	3.2

*SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR plus DESERT WIND

Amtrak released the above ridership figures on May 30 (see issue #204 for February figures). The 3.2% systemwide increase in patronage does not take into account the smaller size of the system due to the train discontinuances of last October; taking those into account, the increase is actually 7.1% this March. a very favorable figure (63,057 people rode the discontinued routes a year ago). Amtrak still includes in one figure the SF ZEPHYR and DESERT WIND ridership, but a footnote indicates that the DESERT WIND had 10,577 riders. Thus the ZEPHYR must have had 33,401 riders, for an increase of 41.6% over the 1979 figure of 23,583. For the second consecutive month, the two highest-increase trains are the SHENANDOAH and the SAN JOAQUIN. Amtrak doubled service on the SAN JOAQUIN in February by adding a second train (partly state-funded).

ADIRONDACK TRAIN TO BE DISCONTINUED

Amtrak said on June 13 that it was posting discontinuance notices for the New York-Montreal ADIRONDACK, with the last run to be made on August 2. Amtrak said that the NY Dept. of Transportation has declined renewing the contract with Amtrak to run the half-state-supported train. Under its present contract, the state of New York pays half of the costs of supporting the service. Amtrak has offered to reduce costs by 50 per cent next year, from $1,862,000 to $888,000 and to run LRC equipment in place of the Turboliner equipment now being used. Service on the daylight run to Montreal began in August 1974 at the request of New York State. Ridership has increased about 13 per cent since last year, Amtrak said. Amtrak president Alan Boyd was "dismayed" at the New York position, and Amtrak indicated that if an agreement can be reached with the state that permits state funding to continue, the train will continue to run.

HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE CUTS AMTRAK'S BUDGET

The House Appropriations Subcommittee on June 12 agreed on an Amtrak appropriation for Fiscal Year 81 of 886.9 million dollars, sharply reduced from the amount that had been authorized for it, and less even than President Carter's own budget for the rail corporation. Congressman Duncan of Oregon, chairman of the subcommittee, said he expects four "political" trains to be cut from the Amtrak system next year, and opposed the purchase of new long-distance equipment for Amtrak. Duncan did not specify which trains might be discontinued. Duncan cut Amtrak's capital appropriations, which would cover new equipment, from the authorized $244 million to only $183 million. Amtak considers this a "serious" reduction. The figures below show the various amounts in question: (figures in millions)

	Authori-zation	Carter Budget	Amtrak Request	House Appropr.
Operating	$674.9	$650	$674.9	$674.9
403-B	29	23	29	18 (plus 5 carried over from '80)
Capital	244	{200	244	183
Labor Protection	12	{	11.9	11
Debt Retirement	25	25	25	0
NEC Purchase	27	27	27	0
Total:	1,011.9	925	1,011.8	886.9

Amtrak said that deferment of debt retirement and NE Corridor purchase payments alone will cost the corporation $8 million in interest costs.

On the "Emerging Corridors" funding, the House subcommittee decided to give $6 million for marketing studies only, while $38 million had been authorized. Congressman Vic Fazio of California attempted to obtain more money for these corridors, but was unsuccessful.

The full House committee will take up the bill the week of June 23, and the Senate subcommittee is expected to begin work on it July 24.

CARTER SIGNS CORRIDOR FUNDING BILL

President Carter on May 30 signed the bill that was passed by Congress on May 22 that authorizes $750 million to complete electrification of the Northeast Corridor and $38 million for preliminary work on the 13 "emerging corridors". How-

ever, as reported above, members of Congress are already attempting to reduce the emerging corridor funding to $6 million, for marketing studies only. An original version of the authorization bill contained $955 million for these corridors, including money for new equipment for them. The DOT will do the marketing studies, after ranking the corridors in order of priority. Under the earlier version of the bill, Amtrak would then conduct engineering and operating feasibility studies and report back to Congress by Feb 15, 1981.

RAIL CANADA

THE ILLUSTRATION BELOW is from publicity material for the annual convention of the National Railway Historical Society, which will be held in Toronto July 23-27, hosted by the Buffalo Chapter of NRHS. Further information is given in Rail Fantrips, page 22.

THE THREATENED DISCONTINUANCE of the ADIRONDACK between Montreal and New York has been protested by Transport 2000 Canada. President Harry Gow and T2000 Quebec president Guy Chartrand told the New York DOT that the state is a popular destination of Canadian tourists, and with gasoline prices and airline fare hikes, New York State stands to lose a lot of tourist money if the ADIRONDACK is dropped.

VIA RAIL PRESIDENT Frank Roberts' new "right hand man" reportedly now is Ray Bechand. Bechand is known as a Ministry of Transport (MOT) "hatchet man." At a recent Science Council of Canada meeting Bechand announced that VIA wants to eliminate the second (northern) Western transcon train over CN lines, replacing it with an intercity service. VIA also reportedly wants to get rid of all regional services (including, of course, recently-mandated DAR and Saskatoon-Regina services). VIA would then consist of one Western transcon (on CP), one or two Eastern transcons, the Eastern Corridor, and an intercity service from Winnipeg to Edmonton. Bechand's ascendancy over Roberts confirms the VIA drift toward an MOT point of view and leads observers to wonder whether VIA will allow unwanted services to decay, leading to abandonment.

VIA RAIL CANADA "does not believe in passenger trains; we just operate them because there is political pressure to do so", a senior VIA official has told a senior tourist operator in response to a direct question. Observers say this attitude explains VIA's "death wish", especially in the Western portion. There, many rail supporters have been unhappy with VIA efforts. For example, Transport 2000 complains that the Prince Albert-Saskatoon-Regina train experiment seems doomed to failure, with slow schedules designed to placate CN, no downtown station in Saskatoon, etc. T2000 believes that VIA West should be divided into two regions: VIA Mountain Region--Victoria-Vancouver-Calgary-Edmonton; and VIA Prairie Region--Calgary/Edmonton-Winnipeg. Rail observers are hoping for a thorough management shakeup in the Western region. Other suggestions are that more funds be devoted to VIA West for equipment, stations and special train such as ski trains; and that the Canadian Transport Commission should monitor VIA intensively in Western Canada from its Saskatoon office.

A DIESEL LOCOMOTIVE and eight freight cars derailed on a bridge over the Miramachi River in New Brunswick on the Moncton-Edmundston line in late May. The fate of the VIA railiner on this line was unknown at last report, but much freight was being re-routed over the main (ICR) CN line via Matapedia.

THE QUEBEC-MONTREAL (CN)line was experiencing delays of up to 50minutes for a few weeks in May, with VIA Rapidos being slowed, because of annual ballasting work. Similar delays on the CP North Shore line were "put off" for a time by CP. On CP's mainline Montreal-Sherbrooke, a ballasting program involving the use of asbestos mine waste was permanently halted due to complaints about possible health hazards. What alternative sources might be used were not specified, but the asbestos-bearing ballast cost CP one quarter the price of regular material.

RAILWAY TRANSPORT COMMITTEE of the CTC has ordered that the CP service Montreal-Farnham, Que.--trains 213-214--be declassified from passenger train status, which an earlier order had bestowed on them. The rationale was that this would free them up for inclusion in "discussions among the federal, provincial and municipal levels of government" which are expected to lead to a new financing agreement for the other rail commuter services in the Montreal area, none of which has been declared a "passenger train service".

BOMBARDIER OPENED ITS Montreal plant for public tours on June 1. Included on exhibit was the new Amtral LRC train (the second trainset) and bits and pieces of VIA's LRCs. On the same date, the first LRC trainset was to be given high speed tests on the CN line west of Cornwall, Ont.

VIA'S ANNUAL REPORT for 1979 was released on May 28. The following is the text of the press release that accompanied it:

Reducing Canada's passenger rail services strictly on the basis of their present economic efficiency without regard for the broader benefits of the train's place in an integrated public transportation system could spell the end of passenger trains in Canada even tho VIA Rail has proven that they remain immensely popular with the traveling public. The warning comes from Frank Roberts, Chairman and President of VIA Rail Canada in the Crown Corporation's 1979 Annual Report... Mr. Roberts reiterated that to measure the value of passenger train services on the basis of their present economic efficiency only is illogical. VIA, he says, remains the sole passenger transportation company in the country that must justify its existence on the basis of total costs while other public transportation companies have their facilities provided largely at public expense.

Witness to VIA's contention that train travel is becoming increasingly popular are statistics in the Corporation's Annual Report indicating that for the third year in succession, the number of people traveling by train has increased substantially. Last year, 400,000 more people traveled by VIA trains than in 1978; an increase of 5.4 percent. During the same period, total sales revenue increased 11.4 percent to a record $121.1 million.

...since VIA took over responsibility for the marketing of intercity passenger rail services from CN and CP Rail in 1977, passenger handlings have improved each year for a total increase of 1½ million passengers, or 34 percent. Sales of package tours, originally forecast to increase by 50 percent in 1979, in fact jumped almost 200 percent for total sales of approximately 50,000 tours. VIA reported a 1979 profit of $811,000 before taxes on the 46 train service contracts it has with Government. These favourable financial results can be attributed to increases in revenue brought about by VIA's marketing efforts and its strict control of expenses. (VIA has contracts in place with the Minister of Transport whereby it is paid for operating train services. Contracts are also in place with CN and CP Rail for the operation of VIA trains and the provision of other services.)

...Mr. Roberts maintains that VIA can anticipate continued increases in demand for its services because of "the public's growing concern about energy, pollution and land conservation plus the necessity for cost-efficient public transportation." He cautioned, however, that in the first two years of its existence --during which VIA was unavoidably preoccupied with negotiations, contracts and organization--it also arrived at two irrevocable conclusions:

*A convenient national public transportation system cannot evolve in Canada while transportation modes continue to be developed in isolation.

*The legislative and institutional framework within which VIA operates will inhibit the Corporation's ability to realize its full potential as an integrated component of a national public transportation system.

Mr. Roberts explained: "What has become most clear is that the planning of the rail system on a service-by-service basis in total isolation from other modes is wrong." "To take the existing system--which is already suffering from that process--and to merely concentrate on minimizing rail costs to the exclusion of all other considerations, can only result in the elimination of the rail travel mode." Explaining "legislative inhibition", Mr. Roberts commented: "VIA's mandate is to provide Canadians with attractive convenient passenger train services while reducing the cost to Government. This is being interpreted as 'Serve the Public regardless of the cost' at one end of the spectrum, while at the other it is taken to mean 'reduce expenses regardless of the consequences'. It becomes increasingly imperative therefore that VIA's mandate and objectives be expressed clearly."

* * *

SEATTLE-TO-VICTORIA traffic in May was reported much reduced from 1979, with the removal of the "Princess Marguerite" mini-cruise ship from the run. The "Victoria Princess" (ex-"Queen of Prince Rupert") that replaced the Marguerite on one late May Saturday carried only 72 passengers on its 6pm sailing from Victoria--one on which the Marguerite may have carried up to 1500 last year. The Victoria Colonist reports considerable argument over the Marguerite in the legislature: "at that point (the ministers) got into an incomprehensible shouting match, gesticulating at each other and hurling insults across the floor" as a Marguerite debate heated up. Service on the route is supplemented by use of the Boeing hydrofoil, the "Flying Princess". The hydrofoil trip takes two hours, while the "Victoria Princess" requires 4½. The latter leaves Seattle at 7:30am and 6pm and leaves Victoria at 12:30pm and 11pm (for a 6:15am arrival) daily except that on Tuesdays there is only one roundtrip, while the former makes three daily roundtrips, leaving Seattle at 6am, 11am and 4pm, and leaving Victoria at 8:30am, 1:30pm and 6:30 pm. Newspaper advertisements have been placed as far away as Portland, Oregon.

A CP RAIL work crew was almost completely wiped out in a bus-tanker truck crash on May 29 near the border between Alberta and Saskatchewan, on the Trans-Canada Highway. A work crew of as many as 36 men traveling in a bus was struck by a tanker truck that caught fire. Reports said 22-25 of the men perished in the accident. They had been working on the CP mainline about 20 miles west of Swift Current, Saskatchewan.

VIA'S "VIALOGUE" EMPLOYEE newspaper in its May issue promised a regular production schedule of 10 issues yearly. Its editor, Brian Heath, as reported last issue, is recovering from a serious automobile crash, and he becomes editorial consultant to the publication, while Laurene Bennett takes over as editor. The May issue (Vol. 2, No. 1) reports mainly employee human interest news, and includes an article on the startup of the RESERVIA reservations system.

ONTARIO TASK FORCE on Provincial Rail Policy completed a rail policy seminar in Toronto in May. Amtrak's L. Fletcher Prouty told the group that passenger service must modernize its equipment and trackage to be successful, and that "it makes good sense to plan inter-modalization around a city rail terminal and bring subway, light rail, buses, intercity rail, and intercity bus service into one terminal with a direct link to the airport." In general, the report on the seminar said, speakers foresaw the need for more main corridor rail services using lighter and more comfortable equipment. Said Peter Detmold, chairman of the Railway Advisory Committee, "It seems probable that the LRC will fill the need for high quality rail service until the close of the century."

MONTREAL-TROIS RIVIERES trains 159 and 160 will be replaced by buses from Jun 9 thru Aug 15 except on Jun 14, 21, 24 and 28, Jul 1, 5, 12, 19 and 26, and Aug

2 and 9 because of track work.

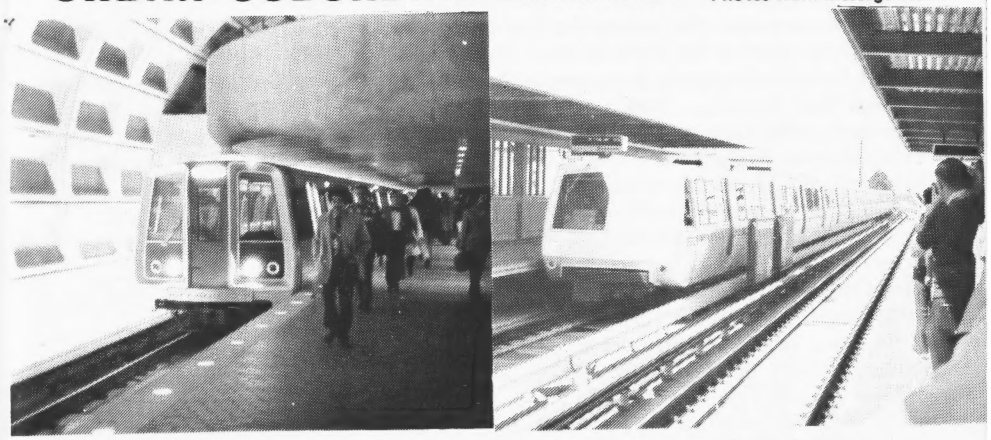
TWO NEW TOURS were announced by VIA Rail in late May. One is an "escapade to the 1000 Islands" from Montreal and Ottawa, including a 3-hour cruise of the Thousand Islands, Gananoque. Opera Trains are offered to the opera in Ottawa from Jul 3-26, leaving from Montreal or Quebec City.

VIA TRANSCONTINENTAL TRAINS in the West will have a maximum consist of 20 cars for the summer, effective Jun 8. VIA said that the CTC has okayed a schedule change for the fall that will put the transcons in the Rockies in daylight hours.

ALBERTA FEDERATION OF LABOR at a recent convention called for improvements on the Edmonton-Fort McMurray and Edmonton-Cold Lake lines to permit them to accommodate fast passenger trains.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

Photos from Message Media.



The Washington Metro system (left) and the BART system (right).

WASHINGTON'S METRO SYSTEM had ridership increases in the first quarter of this year, continuing an earlier trend. March patronage was up 14% over March 1979, and was 36% higher than in March 1978. Metro's directors will decide soon whether or not to keep the present Farecard fare collection system.

THE BART SYSTEM on June 3 got approval from the state Public Utilities Commission to begin reducing the headways between trains, which will allow the system to run trains at greater frequencies than ever before. At present, BART must run trains no less than seven minutes apart. Under the new regulations, BART will be able to operate them as close as 3½ minutes apart. Two trains in each direction will be allowed in the trans-bay tube, whereas only one is now permitted. BART said that the changes should be phased in by about the end of July. On July 7 BART will begin direct service between Richmond and Daly City, eliminating the transfer that has been required for Richmond line passengers to reach points across the Bay. BART said it hopes to finish replacing its flammable polyurethane seats in August.

THE PATH SYSTEM in New Jersey was shut down by a strike of Railway Carmen on Jun 12. As of Jun 15 the strike was still on, with no meetings scheduled. Emergency buses and shuttle trains were brought into operation on weekdays during the strike to help carry the 80,000 affected commuters between New Jersey and New York.

THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC was ordered by the state Public Utilities Commission on Jun 3 to permit the operation of a commuter train service between Los Angeles and Oxnard CA. L.S. Supervisor Baxter Ward had been pressing for such a service for a number of years, and SP had been fighting the idea. The service will run along part of the

(continued on page 15)

A VIEW FROM 10,000 RAIL MILES

by Peter Putnam Bretz

Recently I completed a 10,000-mile rail adventure, mostly on Amtrak, including the SUNSET LIMITED, CRESCENT, PANAMA LIMITED, LAKE SHORE LIMITED, YANKEE CLIPPER, CONGRESSIONAL, a couple of Metroliners (one the inaugural run of the AEM-7--see last issue). I returned home to Los Angeles on the CRESCENT and the SUNSET LIMITED. Herewith are some impressions of Amtrak:

SUNSET LIMITED: Los Angeles-New Orleans Apr 15: Dining car crew lackadaisical and not adhering to posted meal hours. At one meal it took 30 minutes before my order was even taken. Leaving Houston, we were 30 minutes late, and from that point I took detailed notes on the operation:

*There were many slow orders for bad track. Most Eastern Texas and Louisiana small towns require the train to crawl thru town.

*At East Houston yards there was a 12-minute delay for a freight train. We ran at 5mph thru Sheldon... Slow orders west of Dayton... Crawl thru Dayton... Slow orders east of Dayton, near Nome TX, and thru Beaumont... We left Beaumont 1hr, 7mins late, stopped 10mins later, then proceeded at 20mph for 9 minutes... Slow orders 8 minutes later, 7 minutes after that, thru Orange from 2:48 to 3:01pm... More slow orders... Slow orders thru Vinton, Sulphur, west of Lake Charles... Left Lake Charles at 3:59pm, 1hr 19mins late... Slow orders thru Walsh, Jennings, Crowley, Rayne, Duson... Left Lafayette 1hr 32mins late... New Iberia 1hr 32mins late... More slow orders, more small towns with speed limits... Arrival in New Orleans was at 9:05pm, a mere 20mins late due to excessive padding in schedule.

It was a very frustrating ride. I stayed in the thru sleeper overnight in New Orleans. There were no refuse buckets under the car.

Over a month later, on May 18, I again arrived New Orleans, heading west, and again used the overnight thru sleeper while it sat in the station. All switching was completed within an hour after arrival, which was very convenient. Refuse buckets were in place this time. Reason: Not the fact that the station was recently re-dedicated, but because an SP official car was parked on the next track.

Train 1 left 18mins late because we waited for a late PANAMA LIMITED which arrived at 1:13pm.

At Schriver we were 48mins late, New Iberia 1hr 20mins, Lafayette 1hr 22mins, Lake Charles 1hr 34mins, Beaumont 2hrs 2mins. We were victims of the same slow orders and ho-hum operation, and also had to creep thru those same small towns. West of Beaumont, for the first time, we stopped and backed into the hole for a freight. We left Houston 2hrs 27mins late. Our latest time was at Sanderson TX --2hrs 50mins. We remained late, but padding helped into Los Angeles. Amtrak still reported us 2hrs 45mins late, but we sneaked into the station only 1hr, 30 mins late.

On this return trip we had a twin-unit diner, 8800-8801, off the BROADWAY LIMITED. Across Texas it was the only car with properly functioning air conditioning. The lounge car, 3350 "Chessie Club", was very crowded, and many people were heard to comment on how nice the car was ("the best I've seen on Amtrak"), etc.

CRESCENT: New Orleans-Atlanta Apr 18, Washington-Birmingham May 15, Birmingham -New Orleans May 18: For breakfast there was paper linen, the first I've encountered. The lounge car attendant was not available in the car from 7am to 9:15am. Catfish was on the luncheon menu. The dining car crew worked thru to New York. The late southbound train passed us at the Birmingham station. Everybody waves and talks while at platforms. On May 15 out of Washington there was a full 18-car train with some cars reserved for a group of Safety Patrol Jr. High students from Tuscaloosa. Blue paper tablecloths in the diner were not too absorbent. The crew was

nice. The lounge attendant was very conscientious, cleaned up a lot. On May 18 leaving Birmingham the train ran about an hour late and didn't make up any time. The crew was no great shakes. Sleeper "Rapidan River" had the curtains for the roomette doors much too short for privacy.

PANAMA LIMITED, LAKE SHORE, and Corridor runs: I rode in car 2996 "Pine Hill" from Memphis to Chicago; in 2992 "Pine Peak" Chicago-Utica; in 2917 "Pacific Island" Utica-Boston; in Amclub car 20671 Boston-Newark and in 20141 Newark-Baltimore.

Generally, I found the electrified cars fairly clean, but one or two items were broken: the air conditioning was permanently on in "Pine Peak" roomette 1; fans had only one position in "Pine Hill"--off or high; coat hooks were missing here and there. I drank complimentary tea almost continuously aboard the YANKEE CLIPPER, and the attendant was happy to be of service (Boston crew base, no doubt).

SUMMARY OF AMTRAK TRAVEL

Rarely were any trains on time; most were very dismally late (exception: Metroliner into Baltimore 15mins early due to schedule padding). Most everything worked on electrified trains, but the usual problems were encountered on steam-heated trains. I always would wonder whether my sleeper room was going to have an opaque window, but most were o.k.

At no time did a porter shine my shoes or offer to supply complimentary coffee in the morning between 6:30 and 9:30. Sometimes I had to carry my own bags to my room. All porters were attentive to my needs just before I would get off the train as that was near tip time. The one exception to this was on coming into Los Angeles. The porter was nowhere around, and so I had to carry my own bags off the car, but there he was at the bottom step with hand out.

The twin-unit diner was a delight on that same run, with two stewards and all 64 seats in use--no waiting. Supper menus were Xeroxed, and none was available at the beginning of the run.

Most crews encountered were satisfactory, with an occasional bad apple, and an occasional outstanding individual who made traveling a complete pleasure. It seems to me that crews have to put up with unreliable equipment a lot of the time, and unreliable working conditions, with shortages of tools, equipment, food, etc. Then, they are continually harrassed by Amtrak management types who are afflicted with tunnel vision and don't seem to be able to deal with the realities of conditions on board. Amtrak officials and spokesmen in Washington and elsewhere continue to speak platitudes and paint glowing pictures, but often cannot accept reality. One Amtrak manager (and he is a smart man and can get things done) told me that "some of the employees we have riding our trains ought to be in jail." Quite an indictment, yet he spoke of this and similar problems as typical Amtrak and too bad nothing can be done about them. Oh, boy! Shall we accept the fact that Amtrak can't fix itself and go on about the business of running our railroad anyway?

One thing good has been done: the 1000-A forms used to write up a malfunction on a car now permit copies of writeups for the past four months to remain on the car. That way, an employee can see what problems have been mentioned, which have not, and what has been done about them. Will this change expedite repairs? We'll believe it when changes happen at the Los Angeles yard.

An Amcafe car is <u>not</u> a lounge or even an Amdinette. Amtrak should not try to make us believe that an Amcafe car on a lounge-less LAKE SHORE is a substitute. It isn't.

Bottom line: Amtrak still feels that what happens on paper is actually happening on its trains. It still believes that there is no space on trains when the computer says they are sold out. It wonders why cars break down after so many millions of dollars have been spent on maintenance--it thinks all the work has actually been done. And it believes that little or nothing can be done to solve "labor problems", its "railroad relations" problems, or its "equipment shortages" problems unless more money is thrown at it. In short, Amtrak hasn't grown up.

BLOWIN' INTO CAPE COD ON THE "SEABREEZE" --CONRAIL'S FIRST RAILFAN EXCURSION TRAIN

by Peter Roehm

Conrail's first fantrip! First ever! And they came out on top, too. Where to? Cape Cod!--on the former Old Colony lines on a train sponsored by the Massachusetts Bay Railroad Enthusiasts with equipment furnished by the MBTA. The "Seabreeze Limited".

Our eight 1979-built, Erie-Lackawanna-style Pullman commuter coaches, clean inside but rather dusty outside, were being powered by F40PH engine #1010, all from the South Side commuter pool. Those using public transit to reach the departure point in South Braintree just had to detrain from the Red Line cars and walk down and around and board the train. Eventually, if future Cape Cod service originates in South Braintree, an across-platform transfer will be made.

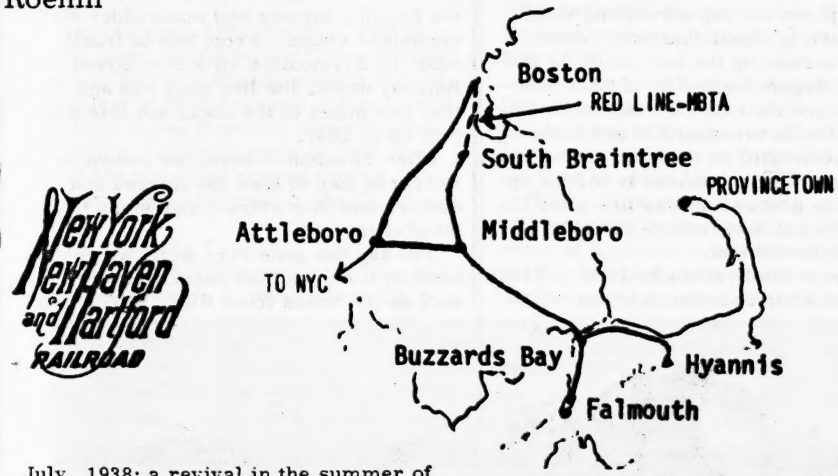
Over 500 riders boarded this train, including many from as far away as Kansas City, Iowa, and Long Beach CA. And the train left on time. Many Conrail officials on board saw to that, and the schedule was maintained over the entire trip. They were not about to have their first fantrip experience go belly up. And the Middleboro Trainmaster, Neville, deserves a great deal of credit for the efficient operation.

The route we used dated back to 1845. In time it was named the Old Colony and then it joined the New Haven thru a lease in 1893, but always remained the Old Colony to employees, riders and those along the line. In one of the many NYNH&H bankruptcies, this one in 1936, the lease was disaffirmed. In 1947 the NH was reorganized including the assumption by merger of the Old Colony with the proviso that if losses due to operation of the OC exceeded $850,000 per year the first two years and/or $500,000 in any subsequent two years, all OC passenger service could be discontinued. Losses did exceed the foregoing ($2 million in 1956) but passenger service, albeit reduced, continued. In 1958 service did stop, but resumed under a one-year subsidy which was not renewed on June 30, 1959, as it was believed that the new Southeast Expressway just opened would render rail service redundant. That was, of course, in the fifties, that era of naiveté, and today one would get an earful about redundant rail services from any commuter on that concrete slab.

Our departure point of Braintree/South Braintree is not far from the first steam railroad electrification over near Nantasket Beach back in 1896, both as an unsuccessful third rail and later as a 30-year-long trolley pole /overhead wire operation. From here too ran an alternate route to Plymouth via Greenbush and Kingston, much of which passed from the scene after the 1938 hurricane; the present Plymouth line also leaves from here.

From South Braintree we run south to Brockton, then (South) Bridgewater, once known as Titicut, which name may be more recently known from a movie, "Titicut Follies", showing the deplorable conditions of the nearby Bridgewater State Institution for the Criminally Insane. Then on into Middleboro, a station where most of the OC local service once terminated. Another branch to Plymouth departed from here but was abandoned by 1939. Middleboro would be a future station on a passenger route to Cape Cod whether the train originated in New York or Boston and regardless of the route it followed. Up until this point we have been on MBTA track--now it will be Conrail.

Our "Seabreeze Limited" is now on the Buzzards Bay Secondary Track and moving at 10mph thru Wareham to Buzzards Bay. Once considered the mainline, this line in the NH era had CTC all the way to the Bay, but is now operated under verbal authority of the train dispatcher as there are no signals other than those at the Canal drawbridge. This line was built in 1872, later merging with the original Old Colony & Newport to form the Old Colony. In the early days trains ran year 'round to Provincetown, Falmouth, Woods Hole and Hyannis. As Hyannis became the population center of the Cape, service to "P-town" diminished and died in



July, 1938; a revival in the summer of 1940 was unsuccessful. Today, business originating in New York alone should sustain the line to "P-town", especially if the train included a disco lounge and economy room sleepers!

The 1951 timetable showed one name train of two running, and it ran weekends as the CRANBERRY, and had its own Alco DL-109 locomotive, #0722, painted in cranberry red and white with its own insignia on the front. From 1952 to 1958 another name train showed up called the BUTTERMILK BAY. RDC units arrived in the fall of 1952 and with them went the heavyweight coaches on the Falmouth-Woods Hole branch. Boston to Cape Cod service ceased on June 30, 1959 but New York service continued thru the summer of 1964 with two name trains, the DAY CAPE CODDER and the NEPTUNE. There had been a NIGHT CAPE CODDER with sleepers, but it went in 1960. Thus, by the end of 1964, passenger service was over on all lines that had been the Old Colony lines except for those in the Northeast Corridor.

As we run southeast we are in the heart of the Cranberry Kingdom. The ex-Maine two-foot gauge Edaville Railroad is just a couple of miles from Tremont (MP 45.6) and still carries on as it has for many years. Toward Wareham we first pass thru South Wareham which is really north of Wareham center, then Wareham, which is surrounded by cranberry bogs and beaches. Crossing Buttermile Bay, we arrive at the attractive Buzzards Bay station and the adjacent tower which controls the signals for the bridge.

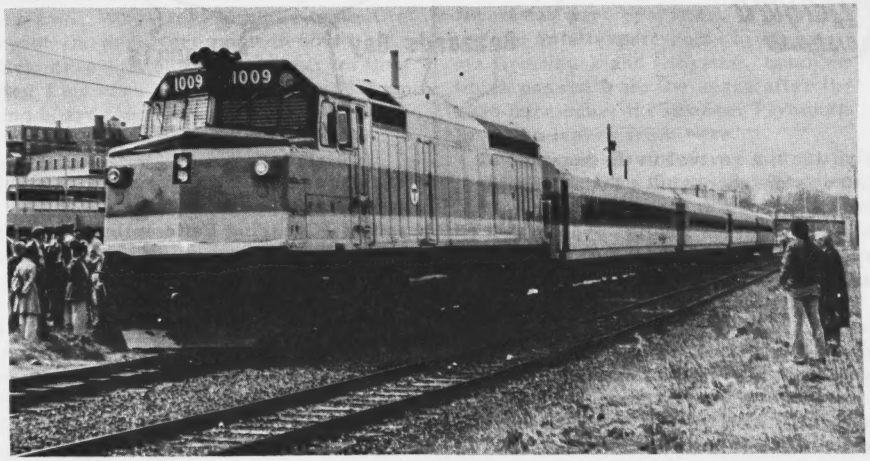
The catered box lunches are loaded and we are on our way across the famous drawbridge built in 1935, 544 feet long, which was the largest vertical lift span in the world when built, and is now just number two. At Canal Junction we leave CR track for MBTA track once again to our first destination in Falmouth.

To Falmouth we are on the Falmouth Secondary Track for the 13.8 miles to end-of-track at the Falmouth depot, now used by Bonanza Bus Lines; the line once extended on to Woods Hole but was abandoned in 1968 and is now a paved bike trail. The ocean is visible from several locations along this line, and one--Monument Beach--still has an intact station with covered platforms, almost giving the feeling that trains regularly stop there. At North Falmouth there is a little-used spur into Otis AFB. Near the Falmouth station is a parking lot for the ferry service to Nantucket and Martha's Vineyard (each island once had its own railroad) and when the 4-mile extension was in serv-

ice it went all the way to the docks, as the ferry was once owned by the New Haven (as was just about everything else in public transportation in southern New England!).

We reverse directions after a 15-minute photo and leg-stretching stop, and return to Canal Junction. From Canal Junction up the east shore of the canal to Sagamore and on to East Sandwich we are back on Conrail track. The why is this is bureaucratic and amusing but is too lengthy to explain. Our speeds are in the thirties, thanks to MBTA upgrading in process on this line after the very minimal maintenance afforded it by the Penn Central.

We're on the Hyannis Secondary Track now, and after East Sandwich we will



Equipment similar to that used on the Cape Cod trip. Photo by the author.

be back on MBTA-owned track. The original (1848) line to Hyannis ran along the north shore of Monument River (now the canal) to near Bournedale and then crossed to the present site of the waterway. Thru Sagamore, Sandwich, and Yarmouth where a branch continues on to South Dennis, end of the track; trackage from this point to North Eastham went out in 1966 and from there to P-town in 1960. The Chatham branch was abandoned in 1937.

From Yarmouth we cut south to Hyannis, 3.5 miles, paralleling the same road all the way. We pass the Christmas Crossing Restaurant near town and find it made up of four former railcars: an ex-NH postwar stainless grill car, a car built as one of the "American Flyers" in 1930 (ex-#1000, the only one returned to Pullman in the fifties to be modified with larger windows and new seating, finally being retired from the Gotham commuter pool in 1975), an unmodified "American Flyer" coach, and the fourth a former and much older NYC commuter coach. From end of track, near the Plymouth & Brockton Street Railway depot, the line once ran another two miles to the docks but this was torn up in 1937.

After 20 minutes here, we return to Buzzards Bay to load the catered box dinners and then retrace our steps to Middleboro.

The day has gone very well, we've been on time, and the passengers as well as the brass from RRE, MBTA and CR are all quite pleased. At Middleboro we continue west on trackage that would be used in any restored service to the Cape from New York and possibly Boston. It is the lower part of the Middleboro Branch and runs into the Attleboro Secondary Track. We now leave agri-country and go industrial as we near Taunton where the Taunton Branch RR arrived in 1836 from a connection with the Boston & Providence at Mansfield, now abandoned, save for a short section between Attleboro Junction and Taunton. From Taunton we reach Whittenton Junction and the abandoned (1966) line north to Raynham, Easton (and out of service to Stoughton) but just before this junction we pass Cotley Junction where the line from Boston to New Bedford and Fall River connects (no passengers since 1958).

Then Attleboro Junction and another line to Raynham, Easton and Stoughton (present terminus of Stoughton Branch commuter service from Boston). Now to Attleboro and the NE Corridor mainline.

Amtrak train 195, the BEN FRANKLIN, went racing by and then we were on our way into Boston's South Station. The line is MBTA-owned and was built in 1835 by the Boston & Providence and leased to the Old Colony in 1893 and thus the principal reason for the New Haven's early interest in the OC system.

At Readville Transfer, 10.5 miles south of Boston, we enter the Dorchester Branch on a connection built in 1979 and also known as the Midland line for the original builder of the route in 1850. This is the only portion of the trip that was not on Old Colony trackage and that was due to the fact that the MBTA's Orange Line is being relocated to the former B&P/OC roadbed north of Readville and is presently closed. The Midland line had passenger service into the forties but became the NH's principal freight access line into Boston; passenger service returned in late 1979.

We arrive well ahead of schedule and look forward to the day when our trip can be done in regular service. Projections on this range from 1981 at the earliest to more likely 1982 or 1983.

(P.S. This story was written the following day in the reclining swivel chair of Southern --ex-Wabash--dome parlor car 1602, enroute thru northern Alabama's mountain country to Chattanooga from Birmingham two cars behind the steamboat whistle-crazy Southern (T&P) 610 on one of its last trips. Few environments are better for such writing.)

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

(continued from page 9)

route of Amtrak's COAST STARLIGHT, with stops at Camarillo, Moorpark, Simi, Chatsworth, Northridge, Panorama City, Burbank Airport, Burbank, and Glendale. Governor Brown called the PUC decision a "landmark decision" and said it was a "precedent for expanded commuter rail service throughout the state." Two daily roundtrips are proposed, leaving Oxnard at 6am and 6:20am, reaching L.A. at 7:30 and 7:50; L.A. departures would be 5 and 5:30pm. Caltrans will finance the service, and the "El Camino" equipment purchased by L.A. County several years ago will be used on the runs. The SP said it will ask the PUC for a re-hearing, and could take the case to the Supreme Court. Earliest startup time would be this fall.

SOUTH TUCSON, ARIZONA will seek federal funds for starting a half-mile streetcar line on an abandoned railroad right-of-way. Officials envision it as possibly the beginning of a larger transit system connecting downtown Tucson, South Tucson and a shopping center in the southside area.

KENNEDY INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT would get a fast transit connection financed by public funds, under a bill that is progressing thru Congress. Most likely plan is for a bus connection from the LIRR station in Woodside, Queens, along an abandoned LIRR right-of-way.

SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA RAPID Transit District general manager Jack Gilstrap has accepted a job as executive vice president of the American Public Transit Association, the industry's Washington lobbying organization. Gilstrap has been manager of the Los Angeles system for 10 years.

NEW YORK LEGISLATURE, just before recessing for the summer, approved a $357.1 million transportation funding bill for the state, and primarily for New York City's Metropolitan Transportation Authority. The MTA will have to increase subway fares by 10¢ and other fares, including those on the Long Island Rail Road, by 20%. New York City's school chancellor, warned that the elimination of half-fare student transportation would be intolerable.

SAN FRANCISCO MUNI system was disrupted when an unseasonable rain the morning of Jun 4 knocked out power in several places.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

THE SECOND ERUPTION of Mount St. Helens in Washington State, reported last issue, did not result in rail service disruptions. A third eruption occurred the night of Jun 12, about the same size as the second, and altho Portland, Oregon was blanketed by volcanic ash, Amtrak train service was not disrupted.....

THE DESERT WIND will be equipped with new Superliner cars on Jun 30. Amtrak said that the inaugural train might have a sleeping car on it, but sleepers won't go permanently on the train until Aug 3. The L.A.-Las Vegas-Ogden train had its first run last Oct 28 and has been using Amfleet equipment.....

AMTRAK'S NEW AEM-7 is a powerful locomotive (7000 hp), but a reader asks whether it, being lightweight, will be able to restart a train if it has to stop on a heavy upgrade such as those found in the Hudson tunnels. Amtrak replies that in Sweden, where the locomotive was designed, there are such heavy grades and no problems are found. The locomotive has a high short-term horsepower rating as well--11,000 hp short-term, for up to 20 minutes--which should be enough power for such tasks. In addition, the Amfleet cars it pulls are lighter than conventional cars. The same reader inquires why the GG-1 is now listed as 5700 hp, when it was introduced as 4620 hp. Amtrak says that the engines have been upgraded over the years to increase their horsepower. (See also the Amtrak locomotive comparison table on page 21.).....

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FIVE-YEAR PLAN of Amtrak's was to be ready by the end of May. Where is it? Amtrak says it's not ready yet, but apparently we will see it soon.....

A BIAS EXISTS in the media in reporting transportation accidents. Crashes of vehicles in modes that have the strongest financial and political backing are underplayed, while wrecks in politically unpopular modes are overplayed. As an example, we found a small article at the bottom of page 41 of the San Francisco Chronicle this month, reporting a crash of an Air Wisconsin commuter plane near Valley, Nebraska. Twelve of the 15 people aboard were killed, and the remaining three seriously injured. If 12 people were killed in an Amtrak wreck, the story would be in front page headlines with many photographs. In fact, if there were no deaths, but injuries only, the story would likely be on the front page. (The last time an Amtrak wreck claimed as many lives as the commuter plane crash was in 1971 in the CITY OF NEW ORLEANS accident. The most recent time an Amtrak passenger died of accident injuries was Dec 1976, on the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR in Nebraska.).....

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VIDEOTAPE NEWS PROGRAM is being done by Amtrak on an experimental basis. The first of four monthly videotapes for showing to employees was ready in May, and was seen by as many as 646 employees (in Chicago). The tapes are distributed to Amtrak centers that have access to a video playback machine, and they run 22 minutes in length. The June program contains such features as Carter's signing of the Amtrak authorization bill, the AEM-7 locomotive, and a demonstration of Superliner cars (with a porter showing how beds are made up, etc.). Amtrak TV News is produced, directed and anchored by Washington's Jim Bryant. (Burlington Northern has a similar TV program called "BN on Camera".).....

AMTRAK PARLOR CAR attendant Ray Kindred, who served on the Amtrak 8444 steam excursion across country in 1976, was found strangled to death in his apartment in Boston early in June. Kindred, who was in his 30's, was known by name and well-liked by many parlor car passengers.....

AMTRAK SUMMER ACCOMMODATIONS are selling out rapidly. Amtrak said that on the EMPIRE BUILDER deluxe and economy rooms were mostly sold out already for the summer, and that coach accommodations were about 60% sold.....

SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR carried a group of NBC vice presidents from Denver to Oakland, leaving Denver on June 8.....

NEW YORK TIMES travel section, with the energy crisis on, devoted most of its June 15 issue to places to go in the Northeast, close to home. One big feature was on Lake Champlain, and the Times noted that "Amtrak serves both sides of the lake." Information on the MONTREALER and ADIRONDACK was given. Let's hope the New York DOT reads the article and is inspired to avert the imminent discontinuance of the latter train, right in the middle of this energy-crisis summer.....

PRESIDENT CARTER'S GASOLINE tax bill that would have added 10¢ per gallon, was defeated in Congress, and the President vetoed the bill which eliminated it, but Congress succeeded in overriding the President's veto.....

AN ENGINEER'S VIEW of the Northeast Corridor was had by correspondent Peter Putnam Bretz on the inaugural run of the new Amtrak AEM-7 electric locomotive, as reported last issue, and at left is one of the photos he took thru the windshield of the new engine .....

BART IS APPLYING for state funds to study and design an Amtrak and intercity bus terminal adjacent to the Oakland West BART station. SP supports the idea, as the railroad would like to develop the 16th Street property, where the Oakland Amtrak station is presently located. SP plans to redesign the entire yards at the 16th Street site, moving the main line farther west of its present location. At the Concord BART station, a Greyhound depot will be built this summer as part of a new busway for AC Transit buses. And at the Richmond BART/Amtrak transfer station it appears that a joint Greyhound/Trailways terminal will finally be built this summer. Little-known BART fact: Santa Clara County Transit accepts both AC Transit and BART transfers at the Fremont BART station, while AC Transit accepts SCCT transfers and passes also. Thus, until June fare increases, it was possible to ride from as far as Gilroy (south of San Jose) to Crockett (north of Richmond) for only 25¢. Incidentally, SCCT has an express route running between BART Fremont and the San Jose SP/Amtrak station, which runs 7 days a week between 5:30am and midnight. Running time is 45mins with six intermediate stops. Next year the route will be extended south to Campbell and Los Gatos.....

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ELECTRIC-POWER CONVERSION of conventional cars may be extended by 1986 to include 900 cars, Amtrak said in a June 11 statement. By mid-May, 257 of 501 planned car conversions had been done. Amtrak has begun referring to the steam-heated conventional cars as its "heritage fleet", indicating a more positive attitude toward these cars than previously, when they were described as junk inherited from the private railroads. Rebuilt conventional cars will go into service on the CRESCENT this fall, Amtrak said. Such cars are also to go eventually on the SILVER STAR.....

THE PULLMAN COMPANY last month filed a lawsuit against Amtrak asking that it be allowed to discontinue production on 35 of the 284 Superliner cars. Pullman said in its suit that the 35 were not covered by a written contract, and it asks $30 million to cover materials and work already done on the cars. On the remaining 249 cars that were covered by written contracts, Pullman expects to make more claims covering production delays which it blames on Amtrak.....

THE COAST STARLIGHT had a second section running from Oakland to Los Angeles on June 9 to accommodate a group of high school seniors traveling to Disneyland. There were reportedly about 60 standees on the train as it left San Jose. Consist of the extra section was: engine 537; cars 6452, 7200, 5665, 5691, 8068, 5680 and 5662.....

THE ANN RUTLEDGE, train 304 at Kansas City on May 30 departed westbound thru Kansas City Terminal Yards, circling the city and heading east out thru the MoPac Neff Yards to St. Louis. Car 21089 on the train had a broken drawbar, and KC Terminal refused to loop the train to head it in the proper direction from Union Station, so to head east it circled the city. KC Terminal's dispute goes back to switching charges applied to the NATIONAL LIMITED but does not cover the ANN RUTLEDGE. Normally, cars are left in the station and the engine is wyed to be put on the opposite end of the train, which was not possible due to the broken drawbar. Consist of the train was: engine 282; cars 20208, 21030, and 21089.....

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SEVERAL READERS NOTED a disparity in reports by Edgar Mead and Ken Maylath in RTN no. 204. Mr. Mead reported that the Conrail line from Harrisburg to Pittsburgh was rough and uncomfortable, while Mr. Maylath called it one of Conrail's best-maintained stretches of track. Comments a Pennsylvania reader, "The problem must have been in the cars Mr. Mead was riding. The track has been nearly rebuilt from Harrisburg to Altoona, and is one of the finest riding tracks on the East Coast".....

THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT of Transportation and the Sacramento Bee newspaper had "California's first Energy and Transportation Fair" in Old Sacramento, near the Amtrak station, on May 30 and 31. There were displays of a number of types of ground vehicles, emphasizing new technology to conserve energy. Amtrak had its first public Superliner display for the state, with one coach shown. Amtrak said that about 4000 people went thru the display coach, and it was the only exhibit that consistently had lines of people waiting to examine it.....

A BROOKLYN READER inquires whether the Amtrak order of long-distance Amfleet cars is in addition to or in place of the proposed new low-level long distance cars. We said it was in addition to in an earlier issue, and Amtrak has again verified that statement. Some other rail publications seemed to indicate the opposite. The one catch is that while Amtrak sees the Amfleet order as an order in addition to more newly-designed low-level cars, that will depend on what Amtrak's capital budget turns out to be in the near future. As reported elsewhere in this issue, the House of Representatives seems intent on cutting that budget.....

AN ARIZONA READER asks why the SOUTHWEST LIMITED is running sleepers at the front and coaches at the rear. As we noted in our Cars & Consist section in issue 204, it is because some transition cars are in the shops for HEP conversion.....

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THE EMPIRE BUILDER running westbound rescued a number of stranded auto travelers in Eastern Washington on May 22 and brought them to Seattle. The travelers were caught in the volcanic ash spewed forth by Mt. St. Helens in its May 18 eruption. The train, already carrying 350 revenue passengers, made unscheduled steps in Sprague, Ritzville and Lind WA to pick up 123 people who traveled free, crowding into the dining car, in aisles and in the baggage room of the Superliner train.....

RIO GRANDE ZEPHYR is the subject of an article by Ted Benson in the May issue of USAir magazine, with spectacular color photography by George Hiotis.....

AMTRAK INSPECTION TRAIN was run June 2-5 as follows: June 2, Chicago-Grand Rapids MI via Porter (C&O line), leaving 7am and laying over in Grand Rapids, parked for occupancy on the C&O. June 3, Grand Rapids to Kalamazoo and return on Conrail, leaving at 8am and laying over again in Grand Rapids, parked for occupancy. June 4, Grand Rapids to Detroit via C&O, leaving 7:30am, with layover for occupancy in Detroit. June 5, Detroit to Toledo and return, via Conrail. Consist of the train was one F40 locomotive, one Amcoach and Amtrak inspection car 10,000.....

THE BROADWAY LIMITED is to become a "showcase train" for the summer months. Special service features will probably include special uniforms, dinner reservations, floor waiter service in the bar car (already in effect), and extra waiters in the diner. The idea for this came from top Amtrak management who wanted to spruce up the politically very visible train. The changes were hoped to be made by Jun 15.....

AMTRAK EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE is still a problem. Here are some examples: Train 19 (the CRESCENT) of May 27 left Washington with cars 2863 and 5477 both without lights or air conditioning. The next day the air conditioning in car 8382 failed. The SOUTHWEST LIMITED (train 3) of May 27 had cars 9909, 9974 and 9980 all without power at Albuquerque.....

THE HIDDEN PERSUADERS: Those who look for such things find a subliminal message in Amtrak's current "America's getting into training" ad graphics. The most prominent letters in the wording are "NG NG" as shown at left--a hidden message telling us that Amtrak trains are "no good"? Incidentally, RTN has always had a hidden message built into its masthead, but the message is definitely pro-passenger train.....

AMTRAK PRESIDENT BOYD said at the May 28 Board meeting that there are 911 cars that can be converted to electric power. At this, Board member Charles Luna (who reportedly loves to boast) replied that he was predicting that the HEP cars will outlast the Superliners and Amfleet cars. In the HEP program, Amtrak's Beech Grove shop is turning out 16 cars per month. The shop also has just completed its first engine overhaul, on P30 engine #708. The shop will do one P30 engine per month. These GE-built units now have about 700,000 miles on their odometers.....

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ILLINOIS TERMINAL RAILWAY had a derailment on ICG tracks at Girard IL on May 28, blocking trains 22 and 301 (the INTER-AMERICAN and ANN RUTLEDGE). Train 301 was turned to become train 22 at Bloomington IL and train 22 was held in St. Louis. Passengers were bused between the two.....

THE AMTRAK CRESCENT, when it gets newly-electrified cars in September, will get an Amdinette car temporarily to serve as lounge and snack car. In early 1981 it will be replaced by a cafeteria/lounge car, as on the BROADWAY LIMITED. Amtrak said that electrified conventional cars are receiving favorable receptions from passengers. After they were placed on the LAKE SHORE, the number of passenger complaints dropped 85% from the previous year's count.....

THE AMTRAK BOARD of Directors has seen reappointment of two members, James R. Mills and Frank Neel. M. Athalie Range, whose nomination has been confirmed by the Senate, replaces consumer representative Mary Head.....

AMTRAK TRAIN 181 NY-Washington Amfleet train, the EMBASSY, collided with an auto at high speed at an Aberdeen MD grade crossing on May 21. The train was delayed 35 minutes at the scene and arrived at Baltimore, its next stop, 25 minutes late. The first car (cafe car) lost its lights, but no other damage was apparent. The crew said there were no injuries, and the next day's Baltimore papers carried no report of the accident.....

THE MERCHANTS LIMITED, train 176, was the scene of a shooting on May 31, south of the New London CT station. A passenger, without apparent motive, shot a young woman, a conductor, and an Amtrak security officer who met the train at New London. The woman passenger died in a hospital. Frank W. Banks, 30, was charged with murder.....

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"Americans sometimes forget that trains are the transportation system of the future, not the past. In a fast-changing world with energy costs, air pollution, deteriorating cities and communities that need to be revived, a need for efficiency, and the changing personal habits of our people, the prospect for rail transportation for people is extremely bright in the years to come."

--President Jimmy Carter upon signing authorization bill for NE Corridor completion and emerging corridor funding, May 30.

CARS & CONSISTS

*20th Century RR Club Rail Fair Special train "Mississippi Zephyr" May 18 Chicago-Dubuque RT: engines 430, 414 (Es); cars dome 9458 "Silver Brand", 5429, dome 9480, 5407, dome 9561, 5422, dome observation 9310.

*Kansas City Terminal inspection train of K.C., Jun 3: engine KCT 76 switcher, ATSF 55600 reefer car for extra generator power; cars dome ATSF 60, track inspection car ATSF 89.

*Santa Fe Board of Directors Special, Oklahoma City OK May 30: (all ATSF equipment) engines 5943, 5944, 5948, steam cars 130, 135; cars 64 "Regal Hunt" slpr, 65 "Regal Lane" slpr, 63 "Regal Crest" slpr, 67 "Regal Manor" slpr, dome lounge 60, 61 diner, 68 "Regal Spa" slpr, 66 "Regal Lark" slpr, business cars 51 "Topeka", 53 "Mountainaire", 52 "Atchison", 50 "Santa Fe", track inspection car 89 (with 28 elevated gallery seats and full glass rear end. (Business cars now have vestibules and diaphragms--no open platforms.)

*SAN DIEGAN, train 777, Santa Ana May 24: engines 222, 214; cars 21181, 21268, 20052, 21185, 21289, 21270, 21260, 21257, 20043, 21255, 21262, 1379.

*PIONEER, train 25, Salt Lake City May 14: engine 226; cars 21868, 21844, 20212, 2913 "Pacific Garden". 1227 added at Ogden & deadhd 21186 to Boise.

*COAST STARLIGHT, train 11, Los Angeles May 24: engines SP 9014 (SD45), 642, 513; cars 1517, 5284 (ex-SR), 4530, dome 9471, 4525, dome 9476, 8334, 4532, 4534, 4533, 4505, dome 9353, 8033, 2619 "Pacific Meadow", 2622 "Pacific Ocean".

*MONTREALER, train 60, New York City Jun 3: engine 965; cars 1455, 2990 "Joseph V. MacDonald", 2085, 20210, 20112, 21804, 21861, 21850 (2hrs late due to storm).

*SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 3, Kansas City May 26: engines 516, 502, 519; cars 1212, 1089, 9990, 2233 "Sebring", 2753 "Palm Leaf", 2561 "Lincoln Park", 8075, 9933, 9970, 9940, 9957, (on at Winslow:) 9912 (deadhd), 2672 "Silver Hollow", 2601 "Pacific Beach", 2610 "Pacific Falls", 2264 "Placid Meadow", private cars "National Border", "Tehachapi" for Lake Powell Adventure tour group.

*The following cars (as of late May) were sitting dead near the Syracuse NY Amtrak station: parlor cars "Fairfield County", "Washington County", "Kent County". Bag-dorms 1510, 1513, 1590. Coach 5460. Slpr-buffets "Sunbeam", "Swift Stream". Diners 8000, 8044, 4035, 4031.

*CRESCENT, train 20, Charlottesville VA, May 22: engines SR 2651, Atk 420 & 472; cars 1095, 1425, 2858, 2857, 2607, 8382, 3329, 5412, 5252, 5660, 5457, 5416, deadheads 5434, 5658.

Amtrak's Locomotive Fleet: The table on the following page was prepared recently by Amtrak, and is up to date thru Apr 1. It lists each type of locomotive used by Amtrak and gives engine numbers and other information. HEP denotes Head End Power in the table. Footnotes: (1) Fuel for steam generator. (2) Also rebuilt E8As.

---- AMTRAK LOCOMOTIVE FLEET ----

Type	Bld	Lgth	Hght	Width	Weight	H.P.	Top Spd	Fuel Cap	Water Cap	Number Group	Qty	Years Built	Wheel Arrangmt
F40PH	GM	56'2"	15'5"	10'7"	259,000	3,000	103	1,500	HEP	200-229	30	1976	B-B
F40PH	GM	56'2"	15'5"	10'7"	262,000	3,000	103	1,800	HEP	230-328	99	1977/79	B-B
F40PH	GM	56'2"	15'5"	10'7"	262,000	3,000	110	1,800	HEP	329-359	31	1980	B-B
SDP40F	GM	72'4"	15'7"	10'8"	396,000	3,000	103	2,500	3,500	500-539	33	1973	C-C
SDP40F	GM	72'4"	15'3"	10'3"	396,000	3,000	103	2,500	3,500	540-649	36	1974	C-C
P30CH	GE	72'4"	15'4"	10'8"	386,000	3,000	103	3,600	HEP	700-724	25	1975	C-C
E8A	GM	70'3"	14'10"	10'8"	335,000	2,250	98	1,200	1,350	450-469	10	1949/53	A1A-A1A
E8A	GM	70'3"	14'10"	10'8"	337,000	2,400	98	1,200	HEP	495-499	5	1949/53	A1A-A1A
E9A(2)	GM	70'3"	14'10"	10'8"	341,250	2,400	98	1,200	1,350	401-449	49	1954/63	A1A-A1A
E9B	GM	70'0"	14'7"	10'8"	343,700	2,400	98	1,200	1,350	470-476	7	1954/63	A1A-A1A
FP7	GM	54'8"	15'0"	10'8"	258,000	1,500	83	1,200	1,200	492,493	2	1953	B-B
FL9	GM	58'8"	14'8"	10'6"	290,000	1,750	89	1,200	1,400	480-491	7	1957	B-A1A
GG1	PRR	79'6"	15'0"	10'4"	477,000	5,700	100	424(1)	2,715	900-929 4930-39	34	1935/46	2C-C2
E60CP	GE	71'3"	14'7"	10'5"	387,000	6,000	120	500(1)	3,600	950-55	6	1974	C-C
E60CP	GE	71'3"	14'7"	10'5"	366,000	6,000	120	---	HEP	956-75	20	1974	C-C
AEM-7	GM	51'2"	14'8"	10'5"	201,500	7,000	125	---	HEP	900-46	47	1979/82	B-B
LRC	MLW	63'8"	12'0"	10'5"	250,500	2,700	120	2,000	HEP	38,39	2	1980	B-B

RAIL FANTRIPS

One Rail Fantrips listing is free. To be sure of entry in time, send full info at least 4 weeks before event. Be sure to address letter as follows: RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

Jun 21: Los Angeles Union Station aboard private car "Afton Canyon"--Western Regional meeting of American Ass'n of Private RR Car Owners, 10am. Host bar & beef luncheon. $9.50. Dennis Ryan, 2410 Queensbury Rd, Pasadena CA 91104.

Jul 12: Massachusetts Central RR excursion, Palmer-South Barre MA (former NYC-B&A - B&M) $25. Only 75 seats. Ex-NYC commuter coach & rare NW-5 diesel (one of 13 built). Mass. Bay RR Enthusiasts, Box 61, Needham MA 02194.

Jul 23-27: Toronto Rail 1980, annual NRHS convention in Toronto, Canada. Railfan extravaganza: mainline steam, 1st-generation diesel, trolley & subway trips, etc. Info: Toronto Rail 1980, 2497 Genessee St, Cheektowaga NY 14225.

Aug 29-Sep 1: Labor Day Weekend excursion on DESERT WIND L.A.-Ogden RT. Ride the Heber Creeper, Utah sightseeing. Only 35 slpr psgrs accommodated. $315 coach, $395 slpr. Pacific RR Society, PO Box 2768, Riverside CA 92516, 714-684-7458 2-6.

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The Annual General Meeting of Transport 2000 Canada will take place at the Richelieu Inn, 430 Ouellette Ave., Windsor, Ontario on Sun., Oct 12 1980, 1:30pm.

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